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Introducing the Bridal Issue

Those two famous words: I do. We all know them and hear them and, most of us have said them one or more times in our life. Nowadays, it seems this phrase should have a disclaimer: I do until... . Marriage is supposed to be for your entire life, and I believe that most of us go into it thinking that is the plan. Then those challenges start to occur that none of us planned for: daily stress, mental and physical changes, children, financial issues, illness and temptations. We agreed to be there and support each other when we started out, but, for more than half of us, we forget and prefer to start over again. Personally, I was married for more than 11 years.

Is Arizona really the leader in divorces? The US Census Bureau ranks Maine, Alaska, Oklahoma, Kentucky and Nevada at the top for divorces. Surprisingly, the South and West, which we think of as more socially conservative, have higher rates of divorce than the supposedly liberal East. New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York ranked among the lowest in divorces. (One interesting fact is that very wealthy people live in New Jersey, which has the lowest rate of divorce. I would love to hear your thoughts on this. E-mail me at mdee@azfoothills.com. We will publish some in your responses at AZFoothills.com.)

Marriages have been declining for years due to rising divorce and more unmarried couples living together. But analysts say younger people may also now be increasingly choosing to delay marriage as they struggle to find work and resist making long-term commitments in the recent recession. Whatever the reason, people are waiting longer before marrying for the first time. Studies show this is a good thing.

I just got back from my nephew's wedding in Mexico, and it was amazing. They had their wedding at a small boutique hotel that caters to bridal parties. The entire hotel was occupied by families of the bride and groom. Spending five days together, you get to learn a lot, and I did. My half-brother, Tom, and his beautiful wife, Penny, are going to be married for 40 years this spring. I was in their wedding party at the age of 6. I was very impressed and started to ask a lot of questions to learn their secret. They had one simple answer. They said, "It was not easy, but we made a commitment to always be there for one another and never to give up on the other."

Today's marriages should be no different, and we should all teach our children from our experiences. I am not saying getting a divorce is a wrong decision. The positive thing I got from my divorce was more time with my son which I would have totally missed out on.

April will be our annual Bridal Issue. Arizona has some of the most romantic and beautiful places to get married, and we are proud to showcase our ideas for the perfect wedding day. We have updates and new information every week on AZFoothills.com's Dream Weddings section. You can look at pictures of newly married friends and their wedding and get updated on the latest trends.

A huge thanks to Ashley Gain of Ashley Gain Weddings and Events for working on this issue. She is amazing, and if you are looking for over-the-top weddings and luxury, there is only one person. Check out Ashley's message on the next page.

All the best.

Michael S. Dee *President and Publisher*

"Live Simple. Love Lavishly"

Michael Dee publisher of Arizona Foothills Magazine based in Scottsdale, Arizona can be followed on Twitter @MichaelSDee.

Michael Dee of Arizona Foothills Magazine welcomes your comments or questions at Mdee@azfoothills.com.

"We are always open to comments and new ideas" says Michael Dee of Arizona Foothills Magazine.